

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Upon entry of the above amendment, claims 1-3 and 7-10 will have been canceled. Claims 4-6 will have been amended and claims 11-17 will have been newly submitted for consideration by the Examiner.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding objections and rejections of all the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

Initially, Applicants would like to express their appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided, for the acceptance of the drawings filed in the present application on January 29, 2001, for the acknowledgment of Applicants' claims for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 and for confirmation of receipt of the certified copies of the priority document, in the Official Action. Applicants further note with appreciation the Examiner's acknowledgment of Applicants' Information Disclosure Statements filed in the present application on May 1, 2001, February 12, 2003 and August 4, 2003 by the return of the initialed and signed PTO-1449 Forms, and for consideration of the documents cited in the Information Disclosure Statements.

Turning to the merits of the action, the Examiner has objected to Fig. 9 because of a typographical error. By the present amendment, Applicants have eliminated the typographical error and have submitted a replacement page without the error. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

The Examiner has objected to the specification because of a number of informalities. By the present amendment, Applicants have amended the specification to eliminate the informalities. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

The Examiner has objected to claims 4-6 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. By the present amendment, Applicants have rewritten claims 4-6 in independent forms including all of the limitations of the base claim. In so doing, Applicants have revised the claim language for greater self-consistency. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection and indicate the allowability of these claims.

The Examiner has rejected claims 3, and 7-10 under 35 U.S.C § 102(e) as being anticipated by JOHNSON et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,603,569). The Examiner also has rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over KAGAMI (U.S Patent No. 5,719,688) in view of TOYODA (U.S Patent No. 6,094,277).

As noted above, Applicants have canceled rejected claims 1-3 and 7-10, and have submitted new claims 11-17. Applicants respectfully traverse the above rejection based on newly added claims 11-17 and will discuss these rejections with respect to the pending claims in the present application as will be set forth hereinbelow. The newly added claims merely clarify the subject matter recited in the canceled claims, but do not narrow the scope of the claims.

Applicants new claims 11-16 relate to a facsimile apparatus which has a plurality of communication channels. At least one of the communication channels is connected to a LAN. The facsimile apparatus comprises a controller which detects receipt of an e-mail, to which image data is attached, via the communication channel connected to the LAN. The e-mail includes a predetermined password. The predetermined password indicates relay of the attached image data to another facsimile apparatus. The predetermined password also indicates a communication channel to be utilized for relay of the attached image data to the another facsimile apparatus. When the received e-mail includes the predetermined password, the controller selects, based on the predetermined password, a communication channel for relay of the attached image data to the another facsimile apparatus, converts the attached image data into facsimile data, and relays the converted facsimile data to the another facsimile apparatus via the selected communication channel, based on the predetermined password. Claim 17 recites a related method.

This combination of features is not disclosed in the applied prior art. Thus, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

JOHNSON relates to a fax interface unit coupled to a local fax machine on one side and to both a LAN and the PSTN on the other side. When the fax interface unit receives a fax signal from the local fax machine and an identifier received from the local fax machine is the same as an identifier stored in the fax interface unit, the fax interface unit converts the fax signal into an e-mail format, and directs the same to the LAN. On

the other hand, when the identifier received from the local fax machine is not the same as the identifier stored in the fax interface unit, the fax interface unit transmits the fax signal over the PSTN to a remote fax machine.

However, JOHNSON does not disclose a facsimile apparatus which receives an e-mail including a predetermined password, as recited in claim 11. JOHNSON also does not teach the predetermined password which indicates relay of the attached image data to another facsimile apparatus and which further indicates a communication channel to be utilized for relay of the attached image data to the another facsimile apparatus, as recited in claim 11. Thus, JOHNSON does not disclose the facsimile apparatus which relays the converted facsimile data to the another facsimile apparatus, based on the predetermined password, and selects a communication channel for relay of the attached image data to the another facsimile apparatus, also based on the predetermined password.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of features recited in Applicants newly submitted claims 11-17 are not disclosed in JOHNSON cited by the Examiner.

KAGAMI relates to a communicating apparatus having a plurality of ports to connect with a plurality of communication lines. However, KAGAMI does not disclose a facsimile apparatus which receives an e-mail to which image data is attached. KAGAMI also does not teach a facsimile apparatus which relays the attached image data to another facsimile apparatus. Further, KAGAMI does not disclose the predetermined password which indicates relay of the attached image data to another facsimile apparatus

and which further indicates a communication channel to be utilized for relay of the attached image data to the another facsimile apparatus, as recited in claim 11. Thus, KAGAMI does not disclose the combination of features defined by the pending claims.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the features recited in Applicants newly submitted claims 11-17 are not disclosed in KAGAMI cited by the Examiner.

TOYODA relates to an Internet facsimile apparatus. TOYODA discloses relay of image information to a G3 FAX and an e-mail including a password. In TOYODA, the password indicates transmission to the G3 FAX (see, e.g., col.3, lines 41-54, and col. 5, lines 45-57). However, TOYODA does not teach the claimed predetermined password which indicates a communication channel to be utilized for relay of the attached image data to the another facsimile apparatus, as recited in claim 11. In other words, the password of TOYODA indicates only transmission to the G3 FAX, while the predetermined password of the pending claims indicates not only relay of the attached image data to another facsimile apparatus but also a communication channel to be utilized for relay of the attached image data to the another facsimile apparatus. The present invention utilizes the predetermined password indicating relay as information for selecting a communication channel, as described in the specification at page 19, lines 8-10. Thus, TOYODA dose not disclose the combination of features recited in the pending claims.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the features recited in Applicants newly submitted claims 11-17 are not disclosed in TOYODA cited by the Examiner.

The pending claims are also submitted to clearly be distinguished over the Examiner's proposed combination, since neither KAGAMI, TOYODA, nor any proper combination thereof discloses the predetermined password which indicates relay of the attached image data to another facsimile apparatus and which further indicates a communication channel to be utilized for relay of the attached image data to the another facsimile apparatus, as recited in the combination of Applicants claims.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so. Applicants have canceled the rejected claims, have amended the objected to claims, and have submitted new claims for consideration by the Examiner.

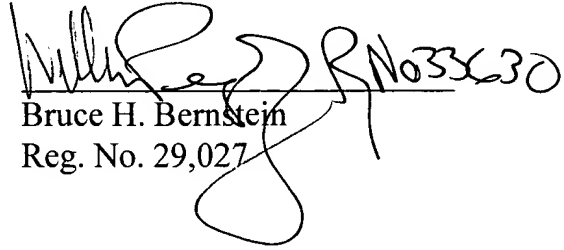
With respect to the new claims, Applicants have pointed out the features thereof and have contrasted the features of the new claims with the disclosure of the references individually and in the proposed combination. Accordingly, Applicants have provided a clear evidentiary basis supporting the patentability of all claims in the present application and respectfully request an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application in due course.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

P20533.A05

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitsutaka NAGAO et al.


Bruce H. Bernstein
Reg. No. 29,027

November 15, 2004
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191